

# PRISON

POLICY INITIATIVE

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May 5, 2014

Chancellor Phyllis Wise  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Swanlund Administration Building, MC 304  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61821

Dear Chancellor Wise,

I am the Executive Director of the Prison Policy Initiative, a national research think tank dedicated to improving U.S. criminal justice policymaking. I write to you out of grave concern about the University of Illinois' recent decision to not renew the contract of my friend and colleague James Kilgore, who is a lecturer in Global Studies and Research Associate at the Center for African Studies. This decision is particularly disturbing on the heels of the recent sensational news coverage fixating on irrelevant details of Mr. Kilgore's decades-old criminal record – information that the University was fully aware of during Mr. Kilgore's hiring decisions.

I have been closely following Mr. Kilgore's work for two and a half years, and can attest to the significance of his commentary and his scholarly contributions to the fields of justice policy and race studies. Mr. Kilgore is a strong asset to the University of Illinois as well, as evidenced by stellar evaluations from faculty and students alike.

I strongly urge the University to renew Mr. Kilgore's contract. I thank you for your attention to this matter, and I am available to discuss my complete support of Mr. Kilgore further with you and your colleagues should you wish.

Sincerely,



Peter Wagner  
Executive Director